

PORTLAND STAGE

MAINSTAGE | NEW WORK | EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2021

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PORTLAND STAGE WORLD-PREMIERE *PERSEVERANCE* BY MAINE PLAYWRIGHT CALLIE KIMBALL OPENS ON STAGE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1.

Reviewers are invited to attend the opening performance Friday, October 1 at 7:30 pm.

Kicking off the 2021-22 Portland Stage Mainstage season is a New Work co-commissioned by Portland Stage and the Maine Suffrage Centennial Collaborative titled *Perseverance*, written by celebrated Maine playwright Callie Kimball.

Perseverance illuminates the complexities at the heart of the suffrage movement and highlights the contributions of African American women who were sidelined by white suffragists while following the parallel stories of the two fictional characters: Perseverance Turner, a Black suffragist and teacher in 1920, and Dawn Davis, a white woman running for office in 2020. Perseverance is determined to elevate her students above the circumstances in which they were born while also working as a lecturer on civil rights. Dawn is running on a platform of education reform while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. By juxtaposing past and present, Kimball reveals both the bravery and the profound divisions that still shape the course of social movements across the ages. *Perseverance* fills a notable gap in the American theater canon: there are currently no significant theatrical works on women's suffrage, and certainly none that approach the movement from an intersectional perspective. Anita Stewart, Executive and Artistic Director of Portland Stage, explains, "Callie's play has the potential to greatly enrich the field of theater and America's cultural heritage."

Perseverance's first public reading was a scene performed at a "Suffrage Tea" hosted by Governor Janet T. Mills at the Blaine House in Augusta, Maine, on Women's Equality Day, August 26, 2019.

"*Perseverance* was commissioned to commemorate the centennial of women's suffrage which coincided with our state's bicentennial," explains Stewart. "Callie found a way to include both events in her play. Because of the pandemic, Portland Stage was forced to postpone the production, but we've taken advantage of the extra time to continue the development process. It has been extraordinary to watch as Callie has so deftly wrapped ideas and conversations

motivating American society today into a play even more relevant to our community.”

Four actors arrived from New York City to perform the roles of “Percy” (Nedra Snipes), “Judge” Elmer (Vin Knight, seen in Portland Stage’s 2014-15 season production, *Our Man in Havannah*), Leland “Moss” Tarker (William Oliver Watkins), and Cooper “Coop” David (Brandan D. Hickey). Local actors perform the roles of Dawn Davis (Catherine Buxton) and Dilly (Sally Wood, directed Portland Stage 2019-20 *Almost, Maine*).

Maine-based playwright Callie Kimball is an Affiliate Artist at Portland Stage, an Affiliate Writer at the Playwrights’ Center, Playwright-in-Residence at Theater at Monmouth, and a former MacDowell Fellow. She won a Ludwig Vogelstein grant to research her play *Sofonisba* (performed this summer at the Theater of Monmouth). Her themes range from historical dramas and classical adaptations to socio-political comedies and futuristic dystopias. Many of her plays feature characters balanced at the intersection of language and power, who struggle to break free from societal assumptions around gender, class, and race.

CAST & ARTISTS

Perseverance “Percy” Turner Nedra Snipes*

“Judge” Elmer Vin Knight*

Leland “Moss” Tarker William Oliver Watkins*

Dawn Davis Catherine Buxton

Cooper “Coop” Davis Brendan D. Hickey*

Dilly Sally Wood*

**member Actors’ Equity Association*

Director Jade King Carroll***

Costume Designer Kathleen Brown

Scenic Designer Anita Stewart**

Lighting Designer Bryon Winn**

Sound Designer Karin Graybash**

Stage Manager Myles C. Hatch*

member Actors’ Equity Association; **member United Scenic Artists; *member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society*

QUICK INFO

Live In-Theater Dates: September 29 – October 17

Digital Streaming Dates: October 13 - 31

Conversations to Enhance Your Experience:

[Page to Stage](#) • Tuesday, Sept. 14 • 6:00 pm • Zoom (Portland Public Library Partnership)

[Artistic Perspective](#) • Sunday, Oct. 3 • In theater, following the show

[Curtain Call](#) • Sunday, Oct. 10 • In theater, following the show

Run Time: TBD

Box Office Hours: Tuesday -Saturday • Noon to 5 pm and 2 hours before performance time

Box Office Phone: 207.774.0465

Box Office Email: boxoffice@portlandstage.org

Tickets Online: <https://www.portlandstage.org/show/perserverance/>

PRICES In-Person: \$20-\$63. Discounts for seniors 65+, and students.

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN TICKETS AVAILABLE: *Find rules and restrictions on the website.*

Digital Streaming: \$25 online, or call the box office for Pay-What-You-Can.

RUSH35 Tickets: \$15 at the door for **registered** participants ages 35 and under. Free to register, includes parties to meet other theater-goers.

ABOUT PORTLAND STAGE COMPANY

48th season

Portland Stage offers Mainstage performances, New Works, and Education programs. The 2021-22 Mainstage season is trying to maintain its regular schedule as safety and artists' unions permit, including one co-production musical with Maine State Music Theatre, [six Mainstage productions](#), [a holiday show](#), staged readings of its commissions, and Studio Series productions. PS promotes and celebrates the creation of new plays with an environment that supports the region's playwrights, builds bridges between its theater and national writers, and develops awareness of theater with three exciting initiatives: [the Clauder Competition](#), the [Little Festival of the Unexpected](#), and [From Away](#), a festival in collaboration with the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa. This year, Portland Stage also celebrates its 12th season of the [Susie Konkel Theater for Kids](#) and the 100,000 student experiences it has provided in the last decade through its education programs. [Subscriptions to Portland Stage](#) are available. More than just a seat in the house, subscribers gain insider access, significant savings, and flexibility. Visit portlandstage.org to learn more.
